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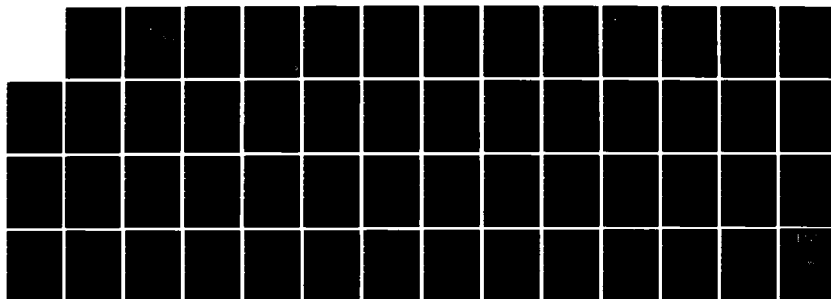
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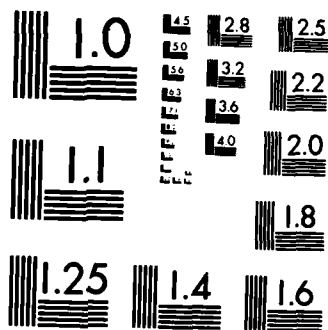
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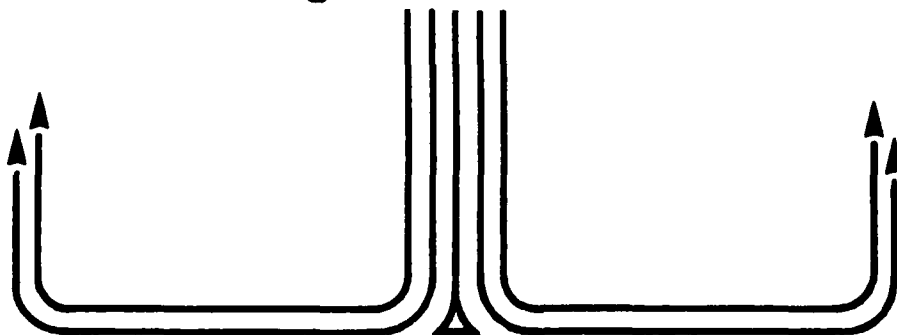
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STUDENT REPORT

EXPEDITING PROCESSING AT MILITARY ENTRANCE PROCESSING
TATIONS TO ALLOW APPLICANTS TO ARRIVE AT RECEPTION
CENTERS PRIOR TO MIDNIGHT.

MAJOR RAYMOND J. LONGI 85-1635

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REPORT NUMBER 85-1635

TITLE EXPEDITING PROCESSING AT MILITARY ENTRANCE PROCESSING STATIONS TO ALLOW APPLICANTS TO ARRIVE AT RECEPTION CENTERS PRIOR TO MIDNIGHT.

AUTHOR(S) Major Raymond J. Longi, USAF

FACULTY ADVISOR Major Robert Maywhort, U.S.M.C.
Montgomery MEPS

SPONSOR Colonel Mayer Littman, Commander Eastern Sector, United States Military Entrance Processing Command

Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of requirements for graduation.

**AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE
AIR UNIVERSITY
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<p>A study of the current military entrance processing station procedures to expedite the process of streamlining processing which would permit applicants to arrive at reception centers prior to midnight on the day they go on active duty. Investigation begins with an examination of the processing period which applicants go through the medical, counselor, operations, and training center stations. Steps of processing are analyzed and recommendations are made for the MARS and MEPS stations for consideration/implementation.</p>			
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PREFACE

This study of expediting military entrance processing stations procedures to allow applicants to arrive at reception centers prior to midnight could not have been accomplished without the help of several people. Major Robert Maywhort, U.S.M.C., my advisor, spent many hours reading my drafts. He also graciously furnished me with an office, access to his staff, and copies of all correspondence pertaining to this subject. I also thank my administrative advisor, Major John M. Gilbert, Jr. who gave so much of his time and efforts in assisting me. I also appreciate the assistance furnished by my sponsor Colonel Mayer Littman. Finally, I would like to thank Brig General Wilma Vaught who gave permission for me to attend the USMEPCOM national conference where I was able to obtain much of my information. This paper could not have been written without their tremendous support.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author began his commissioned service as an Administrative Officer at Myrtle Beach AFB, South Carolina. Subsequently he was assigned to RAF Lakeheath, England where he served as a unit administrative officer and later as a Headquarters Section Commander. He was subsequently assigned to the Basic Military Training School at Lackland AFB, TX as a Training Officer and a Squadron Commander. Later assignments included tours with the AFLC Inspector General, Air Officer Commanding at the United States Air Force Academy, and Commander of the Miami Military Entrance Processing Station. Major Longi obtained his Bachelor of General Studies Degree in History and Political Science from the University of Nebraska in Omaha, and a Masters of Arts Degree in Guidance and Counseling from Ball State University. He has completed Squadron Officer School in residence and the National Security Management course by correspondence.

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REPORT NUMBER 85-1635

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR RAYMOND J. LONGI, USAF

TITLE EXPEDITING MEPS PROCESSING TO ALLOW APPLICANTS TO ARRIVE AT RECEPTION CENTERS PRIOR TO MIDNIGHT.

I. Purpose: To conduct an analysis of the administrative processing currently being conducted by the Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) to ascertain ways to streamline procedures which would expedite applicant processing and allow them to arrive at reception centers prior to midnight.

II. Problem: As a result of current processing procedures, many applicants are arriving after midnight at several reception centers. Late arrival of applicants is contrary to the command's Red Carpet Program. This program attempts to insure applicants are processed with dignity, courtesy, and efficiency. Late arrival applicants causes many training/processing days to be lost. Late arrival of applicants also impacts upon management in the MEPS. Many stations continue to be crowded because shippers who could have departed the station are being processed with those who are there for the first time to begin their initial processing for

CONTINUED

the Armed Forces. Expediting the flow of shippers could clear the station of significant numbers of individuals leaving MEPS personnel more time to give individualized attention to those remaining behind. Finally, applicant late arrival has had an impact upon transportation costs to the reception centers from many stations in the western part of the country.

III. Discussion of Analysis: The paper is an analysis of the processing conducted by the medical, guidance counselor, operations, and transportation functions. Data for the analysis was collected from many stations throughout the country. The study begins with an analysis of the functions performed by the medical section. Processing bottlenecks identified were in administering the serology and pregnancy tests. The function of the counselor section was analyzed. Processing impediments existed because of locally developed procedures and service unique waiver requirements. Procedures were next analyzed in the Operations Section. At some MEPS, too few enlistment ceremonies have been scheduled and problems have occurred in packet breakdown. Lack of applicant control and poor utilization of the military personnel clerk has also impacted on processing. An examination of this section is concluded by an analysis of a study conducted by several stations in Western Sector. Many of these stations are holding applicants overnight, and sending them to reception centers the following morning at a considerable saving in transportation fares because they are shipped during non-peak travel times of the day. Finally, the function of the Transportation Section was analyzed and the impact good management of Passenger Standing Route Orders (PSROs) has on applicant arrival at reception centers.

IV. Conclusions: The study shows there are procedures or initiatives that United States Military Entrance Processing Command (USMEPCOM) and individual stations can implement to streamline procedures and enable applicants to arrive at reception centers prior to midnight. USMEPCOM must continue its recent initiative of meeting with the Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) and the Joint Recruitment Commanders

CONTINUED

Committee (JRCC) to eliminate barriers to effective processing. The MEPS have processing bottlenecks that occur with serology and pregnancy testing. Guidance counselor procedures and service waiver requirements also impact service. The Operations Section has also suffered a plethora of impediments at some stations such as too few enlistment ceremonies and improper use of personnel clerks. Finally, problems exist in the transportation section when Passenger Standing Routing Orders aren't analyzed and applicants are not made available for earlier departure times.

V. Recommendations: USMEPCOM should continue to meet with the MTMC to discuss transportation of applicants and their arrival at reception centers prior to midnight. Additionally, the command should once again seek authority to terminate the serology test for shippers. The command should discuss standardization of packet breakdown at a meeting with the JRCC. Finally, future applicant late arrival should be monitored to ascertain if the delay is caused by local transportation problems near the reception center. MEPS should continue to monitor their internal procedures. Their use of this analysis of the medical, guidance counselor, operations, and transportation sections should assist stations to expedite processing.

Chapter One - Introduction

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to assist the Commander, Eastern Sector, USMEPCOM in analyzing the administrative processing currently conducted by selected Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) throughout the country. The study will show initiatives that can be taken to streamline procedures to enable new inductees to leave the MEPS earlier and arrive at the 14 reception stations prior to midnight on the day they go on active duty. The study will also recommend actions for USMEPCOM to consider to ensure MEPS are able to continue to have applicants arrive on time or earlier.

I will examine the processing currently being conducted in the MEPS. These procedures normally permitted the transportation of applicants from the station between 1400-1600 hours daily. These times were developed to have the applicant arrive at the reception centers prior to midnight. Unfortunately, in many cases, applicants arrive late. USMEPCOM has now asked MEPS commanding officers to analyze their processing procedures, improve internal management, and streamline their operations to permit earlier departure of applicants from the station. An analysis of procedures will probably mean, for many stations, that those going on active

duty (shippers) will begin their physical inspections between 0600-0700 hours with a goal of having the applicants' inspections completed by 0745 hours. They will then be sent to their guidance counselors. Guidance counselors would then work the applicants with a goal of completing their administrative paperwork and having the applicant to the operations section by 1100. Processing would then be continued and shippers would optimally be available to depart from the local transportation terminals as early as 1400 hours.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Brig General Wilma Vaught, the USMEPCOM Commander, has received numerous complaints from such Army reception centers as Ft. Knox, Ft. Dix, Ft. Leonard Wood, and the Naval Training Center at Orlando that applicants are continuing to arrive after midnight. Late arrival of applicants is contrary to the command's Red Carpet philosophy that all individuals receive personalized, efficient, and courteous service. Late arrival of applicants may result in the next day of training being lost to the gaining service and costs the Department of Defense thousands of dollars annually in lost training days. Additionally, tired recruits, who have been processing/traveling for up to 20 hours, do not start their military career with the positive attitude towards the service and basic training that we are trying to foster in today's all volunteer military force.

Applicant late arrival at reception centers can adversely impact all areas of the station's operation. Applicants that are going on active duty are often processed simultaneously with applicants who are processing in for the first time (Dep-Ins). These applicants will not usually go on active duty for several weeks or months. The simultaneous processing of both types of applicants has contributed significantly to the overcrowded conditions that exist at many of our stations throughout the country. Efficient processing of shippers would enable them in many instances to leave the station sooner resulting in less crowded conditions and more efficient processing of those left behind. There is little doubt that crowded conditions result in a degradation of service to the applicant.

Guidance counselor (liaison) personnel, who are assigned to the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force Recruiting Commands also have their mission accomplishment adversely impaired by crowded conditions. The challenge to the MEPS commander is to gain counselor support to streamline their operating procedures to process shippers at a designated time which would leave them more time to give individualized attention to the person who was undecided about the service or a career field.

This study will also show that late arrival of applicants at reception centers has had an impact upon the cost required to transport applicants to the reception centers. This statement is supported by the analysis conducted by several

MEPS in the western part of our country that had been sending applicants to reception centers during peak travel times of the day. Many of these applicants were arriving late at reception centers. Some of these MEPS stations were able to change their procedures to process many of their shippers in the afternoon, hold them overnight in local hotels, and then send them to the reception centers on early morning flights at a substantial savings to the government in travel costs. This will be discussed in more detail later in the study.

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The problem of expediting applicant processing has been analyzed from the perspective of a former MEPS commander. In-depth interviews with current commanders, and their assigned medical, recruiting, operations and transportation personnel, were conducted to determine current procedures and to get their ideas of what procedures could be changed. I also discussed this study with numerous individuals assigned to the sectors as well as the headquarters. See the attached bibliography for a listing of individuals interviewed. After conducting these interviews, I researched the minutes of previous USMEPCOM staff meetings, and correspondence from various stations that addressed the issue. Additionally, I have attended the annual USMEPCOM conference that was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in November 1984 and participated in problem solving groups that addressed the issue in some detail. Any findings or

conclusions that are reached will not necessarily be valid for all MEPS because of internal operation procedures or lack of commercial transportation from specific geographic locations.

Applicant late arrival at the reception centers has become exacerbated by the deregulations of the airline industry. Passenger Standing Route Orders (PSROs), which are obtained for the MEPS by the Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC), are often changed weekly or even more frequently to take advantage of fare fluctuations. It has become virtually impossible for many commanders, or their transportation clerks, to stay abreast of these changes. Once a commander has examined PSROs to ensure applicants will arrive at reception centers prior to midnight, the problem could again occur in subsequent weeks when PSROs are changed by the MTMC.

The author is cognizant that many commanders, because of the tremendous emphasis placed on expediting processing by the sectors and the headquarters, have examined their PSROs and made significant efforts in obtaining earlier departure times for their applicants. Other stations, however, have been unsuccessful because of MTMC regulations. For example, we were told at the national conference that MTMC must get the applicant to the reception center on the cheapest flight regardless of the inconvenience to the applicant (16-1). They are required however to get the traveler to the reception center before midnight; but, their guidance does not take into consideration the considerable delays sometimes experienced by

many applicants in getting from the final terminal to the reception center. Some MEPS have had PSRO changes denied because the new PSRO would cost MTMC 50 cents more per fare, even though the applicant would have arrived at basic training several hours earlier (21-1).

Late arrival of applicants has not been a problem at all of the reception centers, but rather certain centers that have had problems for a long period of time. Applicant late arrival has continued at Ft. Knox, Ft. Dix, Ft. Leonard Wood, and the Orlando Naval Training Center. Problems at these stations may not always be caused by the applicant arriving late in the local area, but may be due to problems with obtaining local transportation to get the applicant to the reception center. This has been corroborated as the problem at Philadelphia Airport which is the final terminal for applicants going to Ft. Dix.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to focus attention on our internal procedures, to streamline operations, and to improve management procedures so applicants can be processed more efficiently and arrive at their respective reception centers prior to midnight. The study has been generated by Colonel Mayer Littman, Commander Eastern Sector, USMEPCOM who has asked my assistance as a prior MEPS commander. I realize that an analysis of the processing has been conducted by many MEPS commanders already. However, hopefully my synthesis of ideas

and compilation of techniques used by other stations to streamline their programs will be of some benefit to other commanding officers.

Chapter Two

MEDICAL FLOW MANAGEMENT

The MEPS commander must thoroughly understand the various functions being performed by the medical personnel and the proper flow of applicants through the medical section to ensure they are being processed efficiently. The medical section naturally has the responsibility to perform complete physical examinations on all male and female applicants for the Armed Forces. The examination consists of examinations of the heart, lungs, pelvis, ears, eyes, nose and throat, and bone. The doctor then reviews the applicants' medical history and current physical and mental condition and reviews medical documentation of medical doctors and consultants. The doctor then determines whether reevaluations/examinations are required to determine the applicants suitability for the service.

These complete physical examinations are conducted normally when the applicant dep-in to the service. A dep-in is an applicant in the station for initial processing or a physical examination who would normally be going on active duty sometime in the future. These applicants arrive at most stations between 0600-0700. They are then scheduled for a medical briefing which tells them about their upcoming physical examination and the paperwork that must be completed. After

this briefing has been concluded, the MEPS commander would then normally welcome the applicants to the station. At the conclusion of the commander's briefing, the physical examination would begin. These physical examinations are normally completed by 1000 hours. Figure 1 is a chart developed by Central Sector on the medical/processing flow that is typical for those applicants who will dep-in to the service.

Applicants who are going on active duty, also known as shippers or dep-outs, will normally arrive at most stations between 0600-0700 hours. They normally receive a medical inspection, rather than a complete physical examination, if their dep-in physical examination was conducted within the past 12 months. The inspection includes a height and weight check and a blood test known as the serology test to ascertain the presence of syphilis. Female applicants give a urine sample to detect pregnancy. This inspection normally occurs between 0615 to 0745 hours. Applicants are subsequently sent to their guidance counselors for further processing by their respective service. (See Figure 2 for additional information on applicant processing for shippers.)

MEPS commanders should continue to look for ways to streamline medical procedures. Bottlenecks have occurred when administering the serology test. Some stations, in the past, have waited for the serology test to be administered to all

applicants before spinning the blood in the centrifuge. This procedure could take up to 30-45 minutes. In many cases, the applicant's processing was delayed pending the results of the blood test.

The requirement to perform this second serology test on shippers is extremely time consuming, expensive, and adds little to the completion of the physical inspection. This test is initially administered to the applicants when they receive their full physical examination upon dep-in. The blood test determines if the applicant has ever had or currently has an active case of syphilis. Dep-in applicants who have a positive test when receiving their physical examination are temporarily disqualified from active duty until a fluorescent treponemal antibody-absorption test (FLA-ABS) can be completed by local health authorities. On the other hand, applicants who are shipping, who have a positive test, are allowed to proceed to basic training. Medical authorities at the training center are notified.

Since USMEPCOM has added the responsibility to conducting another serology test for shippers, at least another 30-45 minutes has been added to the processing schedule. Statistics provided by Hq USMEPCOM show that less than one applicant in 10,000 processed will have a confirmed positive test for the disease. Indeed, the command processed 400,000 individuals for the Armed Forces in fiscal year 1984 and only 34 had a positive test for syphilis (42-1).

Pregnancy testing is another medical procedure that has significantly delayed processing at some stations. Most commanders know that there are two types of pregnancy kits available to test applicants; one test takes one hour for completion while the other test takes up to two hours before the results are obtained. One Chief Medical Officer (CMO) stated that in his opinion the one hour test wasn't as accurate as the two hour test; however, there is no medical evidence to corroborate his statement (41-1). The command requires that this test be completed because studies have shown that approximately 7% of our female applicants are pregnant when receiving their physical inspection before going on active duty.

Chapter Three

COUNSELOR FLOW MANAGEMENT

The commander should have thorough knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of the guidance counselors and their management of the flow of applicants through their offices. Counselor management of applicants will directly impact the applicants' arrival time at the MEPS operations section for continued processing for active duty. The MEPS commander has only limited authority to make management changes to their internal procedures since these counselors work for the commanders of the recruiting services.

Guidance counselors are assigned to the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and the Air Force. Counselors manage and control the military and administrative processing for their service's applicants. Their duties are normally to review enlisted documents to ensure accuracy of the documents prior to final processing. They work closely with the MEPS to help determine the applicants' physical and moral eligibility for the Armed Forces. They also conduct applicant interviews and render assistance in applicant job selection prior to requesting assignment data. The amount of time each counselor spends with each applicant varies depending upon the circumstances and whether the applicant is in the MEPS to dep-in or out.

Generally speaking, counselors would work their shippers from 0745-1100 hours. On the other hand, they would normally spend more in-depth time with an applicant who was there to dep-in, working with these individuals from 0930-1500 hours. I will identify some of the problem areas that have surfaced because of locally developed procedures or service unique requirements.

Some stations are experiencing significant delays in expediting processing because of additional responsibilities placed on the counselors by their respective commanders. There are situations in the command where Marine counselors have added a class for their shippers called the "Moment of Truth." The class has been developed with a level of intensity to get the potential Marine to tell the truth about anything they may have been involved in prior to their entry into active duty. The test is designed to preclude the applicant from being considered ineligible for service at the reception center because of some past criminal activity. After the briefing, the applicants are then individually interviewed by a commissioned officer. At some other stations, Marine counselors have added a physical test to measure the physical strength of their recruits. These tests dramatically increase the time required to process a Marine shipper.

The Navy's waiver requirements for those tentatively disqualified from active duty on shipping day also seriously impact applicant processing. Navy regulations state that an applicant cannot be considered for a waiver for a moral or

legal infringement of the law until the applicant has been certified to be physically qualified for active duty. This requirement has necessitated that the processing of a shipper needing a waiver be delayed until the Navy commander or Executive Officer is present and determines whether a waiver is appropriate in the case.

The MEPS commander must be skilled in the art of diplomacy when trying to expedite applicant processing and handling these delays with counselors. The worst thing that can happen is for the MEPS to be perceived to be the adversary of the recruiting services. Service attitudes vary from station to station towards expediting processing. In Minneapolis one counselor stated, "I couldn't care what time applicants arrived at reception centers once they had signed up" (6-1). In the Fresno MEPS, a more caustic comment was made that expediting processing would pamper the applicant and would also damage the recruit's attitude in the long run (10-1). On the other hand, the attitude among the counselors at Miami MEPS was more favorable. They had enthusiastic support from all the services (44-1). Once the commander knows the attitude of the counselors, he'll be in a better position to alleviate their concerns and obtain their support.

Chapter Four

OPERATIONS FLOW MANAGEMENT

The Operations Section is really the nucleus of the MEPS station. This section has the responsibility to prepare, maintain and dispose of all applicant files, maintain a Military Entrance Reporting System (MEPRS), billeting applicants, in-house registration, and orientation of all applicants; briefing and arranging transportation to initial duty stations for all enlistees departing on active duty, and for all applicants requiring out of station medical consults by a specialist; conducting applicant preenlistment interview and fingerprinting; typing, breakdown, assembly, and distribution of enlistment documents and packets; conducting administrative orientations, and providing oath of enlistment ceremonies for all enlistees.

Significant delays occur within the operations section which can significantly impact upon applicant processing. Delays have occurred in some stations with too few enlistment ceremonies being scheduled, and packet breakdown which is done differently for each of the four services. MEPS shipping briefings, developed to ease the applicant's transition from the Red Carpet treatment of the MEPS to the realities of basic

training, have also added time to processing applicants. Additional problems have been observe with station's not having proper control of applicants, i.e., not using the control desk. Although many of these problems are minor, several of them existing at one station can lead to significant applicant processing delays.

The Raleigh, North Carolina, MEPS conducted an analysis of their processing and was successful in streamlining their procedures. The commander put a stopwatch on all functions, and kept daily logs on critical transition periods. They eliminated a bottleneck at their control desk by increasing the number of enlistment ceremonies. They developed a transportation list which is a management tool that gives all parties concerned a listing of who is to ship where, and the necessary final time to conclude processing. When the processing is completed, and the shipper is ready for the transportation briefing, his or her name is crossed off the list by operations personnel giving operations a system of checks and balances on the guidance counselor's operation. When it comes close to the designated cut-off time, operations personnel can walk to the counselor's office to check on the status of an individual that must be worked to complete shipping. Counselors, using this tool, have a visual picture of the entire shipment, and work applicants in the order in which they will leave the station. Figure 3 is a copy of a

daily transportation list produced by this station.

Chapter Five

MANAGEMENT OF THE TRANSPORTATION FUNCTION

Sound management of the transportation function is absolutely essential if the MEPS is to achieve its goal of having applicants arrive at reception centers prior to midnight. Even though the transportation function actually falls under the Operation Section, it will be dealt with as a separate entity because of the importance it plays in expediting applicant processing. The transportation clerk's primary function is to brief departing applicant group leaders and all enlistees on travel arrangements, explaining the itinerary step by step. The clerk makes transportation reservations on projected shipments on a monthly and weekly basis and adjusts the shipments as necessary. The clerk will normally begin to brief the applicants at 1145 hours; a second briefing if necessary would normally be conducted at 1245 hours. Applicants would then begin to depart the MEPS for their transportation to the reception centers departing the local air, rail, or bus depot at approximately 1400 hours.

The transportation clerk must work closely with the MEPS to ensure the station's PSROs are as early in the day as they can possibly be. As previously stated, there are sometimes conflicts of interest between the station and the MTMC. The

clerk must be fully cognizant of the station's PSROs and be sensitive to the reaction of subsequent PSRO changes upon applicant arrival times at the reception centers. Clerks should review PSROs in reverse order to ensure that those applicants that must leave first are processed first. A useful tool is to use the transportation list that was developed by the clerk in Raleigh.

MEPS commanders have had a great deal of success in changing their PSROs. The Raleigh commander was able to change the PSRO that called for an 18-hour AMTRACK ride to Orlando NTC to a five-hour airline flight. Recruits who used to arrive at Lackland AFB at 1100 hours and the San Deigo Navy Training Center at 2130 hours are now arriving at these stations at 1800 and 1840 hours because of PSRO changes (13-1). Similar successes were achieved by other MEPS. Jacksonville MEPS was able to streamline operations to permit five out of nine of their PSROs to be changed with applicants now being scheduled to leave as early as 1120 hours (24-1). Minneapolis MEPS changed its PSROs for applicants going to Ft. Dix (6-1). Miami MEPS initiated a change to replace a 25-hour AMTRACK ride to Ft. Dix with a three hour airline flight (28-1). Springfield MEPS changed several of their PSROs (37-1). On the other hand, some stations like Manchester MEPS did not need to initiate any PSRO changes because their applicants were arriving at reception centers before 2200 hours (40-1). Unfortunately, some station's requests have been turned down due to MTMC

regulations. Philadelphia MEPS was denied earlier flight reservations that would have saved applicants several hours of traveling time because of a slight 50-cent increase in the fare (21-1). Problems of this nature normally are escalated to the sector for resolution.

The most significant changes in expediting MEPS processing was made by many stations in the western part of our country. Oregon MEPS, like many other stations in the west, had problems with limited flight availability from local airports. Their station, along with Butte, Fresno, Los Angeles, Seattle and others changed their processing procedures to process some of their shippers in the afternoon, keep them overnight in local hotels, and then send them on to their respective reception center the following morning. Rather than costing the command more money because of hold-over costs for hotels, these stations are actually saving the command thousands of dollars. For example, Fresno MEPS has kept a record of costs incurred due to this procedural change. During a two-month period they saved the command \$17,908.00 for 74 shippers to Ft. Dix and \$9,612.00 for 54 shippers to Orlando NTC. Transportation costs to Ft. Dix were reduced from \$492.00 to \$250.00 and for Orlando from \$449.25 to \$271.25 per applicant. The reduced costs also include the cost of meals, lodging, and transportation to the airport. The commander was literally able to cut the cost of an airline ticket in half by shipping applicants on early morning flights rather than during peak travel times of the

day. Furthermore, applicants are now arriving at reception centers well before midnight (10-1). This station's innovative approach in getting applicants to reception centers earlier has the potential of saving hundreds of thousands of dollars annually for the Department of Defense.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSIONS

I have analyzed MEPS processing at selected stations throughout the country to ascertain what types of management actions could be initiated to streamline operations which would allow shippers to depart earlier from the MEPS and arrive at their reception centers prior to midnight. My conclusions are based upon personal observations and numerous inputs received from various stations throughout the country and ideas generated by individuals assigned to the problem solving groups at the national conference in Milwaukee in November 1984. My conclusions are that there are problems that can be addressed by USMEPCOM as well as problems worked by individual MEPS stations to expedite processing. I have submitted ideas for the USMEPCOM's consideration because at the national conference some commanders thought that command initiative in certain areas would assist stations in achieving the command's goal. The following findings are submitted:

USMEPCOM and the MTCC have failed to communicate effectively in the past on their perceived conflict of interest in the manner in which applicants are to arrive at reception centers. It appears that both commands had been marching to different "drummer", however, this situation has been less of a

problem during the past several months because of USMEPCOM initiative in discussing mutual problems with them.

The requirement to perform the second serology examination for shippers has added a significant amount of time to medical processing for those going on active duty. The facts seem to indicate that the test should be eliminated. Only 34 applicants had a confirmed positive test out of 400,000 tests administered in fiscal year 1984 (42-1). The test is time consuming, expensive, and adds little to the completeness of the physical inspection.

Shipping briefings that have been developed by various MEPS throughout the country to ease the applicant's transition from the Red Carpet treatment to the realities of basic training have added significant amounts of time to processing shippers. Investigation reveals that the services have already developed similar briefings depicting their training programs and they are shown to applicants in most cases.

Enlistment package breakdown that is conducted differently by the MEPS for each of the four services takes too much time and contributes too numerous administrative errors.

Applicant late arrival at reception centers has not always been due to less than good management by the MEPS, but rather, due to local transportation problems at the final transportation center in getting applicants to the reception centers.

Medical Section processing could be improved at some

stations. In a few cases, operating hours did not begin soon enough in the morning to ensure a smooth flow of applicants to guidance counselors. Problems have existed with serology testing in that some stations were not spinning blood in the centrifuge as collected but waiting for all applicants to give a blood sample before running the test. Bottlenecks had been created. Problems also existed in conducting the pregnancy test for female applicants. Urine samples were not always collected first thing in the morning and occasionally the two-hour kit was used when it would have been more appropriate to use the one-hour kit.

Guidance counselor processing procedures have also contributed to delays in expediting applicant processing. Some Marine counselors have added the previously discussed "Moment of Truth," while other stations have added a physical test as well. The Navy's waiver requirement that applicants must be qualified for active duty before considering a waiver has caused significant delays in many stations. Guidance counselor mixing of shippers with those who are there to do their initial paperwork for enlistment has also contributed to processing delays.

The Operations Section has also had problems at a few of our stations. Improper use of the control desk in not requiring applicants to sign in/out has contributed to some delays. Too few enlistment ceremonies has also been a problem at some stations. A great deal of time is spent in breaking

down applicant enlistment packages four different ways for each of the services which has led to numerous administrative errors. MEPS shipping briefs, although professionally accomplished to help the applicant transition to basic training, are redundant because the services give similar briefings to their applicants. Finally some stations have not been using their military personnel clerk as effectively as possible to prepare paperwork in advance and to conduct part of Pre-accession Interview (PAI) whenever possible.

Transportation sections have had significant problems in the past but, problems have for the most part been eliminated because of the command's efforts to streamline processing. Not too many months ago, many transportation clerks did not know what times their applicants were really arriving at reception centers, nor the impact subsequent PSRO changes had on applicant arrival times. Many clerks, even though realizing problems existed, had not established a rapport with the MTMC to resolve problem areas. Finally few had analyzed their PSROs and made applicants available to the MTMC whenever possible for earlier departure times.

Chapter Seven

RECOMMENDATIONS

USMEPCOM should continue the process of meeting with the MTMC whenever necessary to discuss mutual problems. An idea put forth at the national conference was for the MTMC to consider changing the applicants desired time for arriving at reception centers from 2400 to 2200 hours. Additionally, MTMC should be asked to consider traveler inconvenience when scheduling PSROs for stations. Finally, MTMC should be asked to develop a system to stabilize PSROs for a period of 30 days or more to enable MEPS to more efficiently manage applicant arrival times at reception centers.

USMEPCOM should once again seek approval to terminate the requirement for the second serology test. Only 34 positive tests out of over 400,000 tests administered in the last calendar year are strong reasons to cancel this medical procedure.

USMEPCOM should give MEPS the authority to eliminate locally developed shipping briefings when time is critical in expediting applicant processing. Many of these briefings can take up to 15-30 minutes to complete. The services, on the other hand, have already developed similar briefings and have films depicting their basic training programs. These films

could be shown to the applicants by their service at the recruiting station.

USMEPCOM should discuss standardizing procedures for applicant package breakdown when it meets with the Joint Recruitment Commanders Committee (JRCC). Current procedures require different methods for putting the paperwork together for the Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force applicants. These different procedures are not only time consuming but lead to numerous administrative errors in applicants packets.

USMEPCOM should continue to work closely with those reception centers still experiencing the problem of applicant late arrival. If the problem cannot be traced to a particular MEPS or region, the command should ascertain if the problem is due to delays in getting the applicant from local airports to the reception centers. This has been a problem at the Philadelphia Airport with local transportation to Ft. Dix. In these cases, if timely local transportation cannot be obtained, the reception center should be asked to place a liaison in the terminal with government transportation furnished applicants to the reception center.

Medical processing should be streamlined within the MEPS whenever possible. Time can be saved when administering the serology test. Serology testing was analyzed during the Eastern Sector Commanders' Conference, "Inward Look" and the Medical NCOIC Conference and procedural changes were recommended. Blood should now be spun in batches which enables

a continuous flow of applicants to be processed and then routed to their respective service counselor. Blood should be batched based upon the capacity of the centrifuge. At least two technicians should be used when conducting the test, one to draw the blood and one to run the centrifuge. Pregnancy testing is another procedure that can be streamline. Female applicants should give a urine sample immediately upon their arrival in the station. The one-hour pregnancy kit should be used whenever time is critical. Two-hour kits could be sent to those stations where the time factor is not as important.

MEPS commander should continue to meet with their recruiting counterparts at the Interservice Recruitment Committee (IRC) to discuss mutual problems and the benefits of expediting MEPS processing for applicants. Counselor attitudes towards expediting processing should be assessed and concerns addressed. Counselors should be encouraged to prepare as much of the applicants paperwork in advance as possible. They should be asked not to delay the processing of shippers because the individual they are working with is missing a document but should be encouraged to continue to process those individuals without problems and then return to the other applicant later. Counselors should realize that by processing shippers at a designated time it will leave them far more time to give personalized attention to that dep-in who may be uncertain about entering the service or a particular job. If service waiver requirements adversely impact applicant departure, the

MEPS should discuss the possibility of obtaining the waiver the day before, or ship the applicant the following day to the reception center.

The Operations Function is really the nucleus of the station. The functions performed by the station should be closely monitored. If necessary, put a stop watch on all functions and keep daily logs on critical transition periods. Control desks should maintain control over applicants by having them sign in/out of the station. Additional enlistment ceremonies should be scheduled whenever necessary. The Military Personnel Clerk can be used to verify the information of the DD Form 93 which could have been completed when the applicant came to dep-in. The clerk can also be used to ask the last two Pre-accession Interview questions concerning the term of enlistment and enlistment options, and then can type the DD Form 4/3s. An exception to policy has been granted by USMEPCOM to waive the privacy requirements, but this step cannot be accomplished unless the first part of the PAI was conducted after the doctors' interview (15-1). Predeparture briefings, enlistment ceremonies, and shippers briefings can all be conducted at the same time. Package breakdown can also be accomplished during this final phase of processing (15-1). Locally developed shippers briefings, with permission of USMEPCOM, could be cancelled during a time crunch.

Finally, the Transportation Function should continue to be monitored to streamline procedures. The transportation clerk

should continue to analyze PSROs and provide MTMC with earlier availability times whenever possible. The clerk must know what times applicants are arriving at reception centers and the impact PSRO changes will have on subsequent arrival times. When briefing applicants, good arguments have been made for mass travel briefs and for individual destination travel briefs. Consider doing this prior to the enlistment ceremony. Finally preprinting information on the DD Form 1341 will save the travel clerk time (44-1).

The purpose of this study has been to analyze current MEPS procedures to ascertain what procedures could be streamlined to enable applicants to arrive at reception centers prior to 2400 hours. This study was generated by Colonel Mayer Littman, Commander Eastern Sector USMEPCOM, who asked me to analyze the problem from the perspective of a former station commander. During the course of my investigation, I found that commanders are enthusiastically supporting the goal of expediting processing for applicants. Many stations such as Raleigh MEPS have thoroughly analyzed their internal procedures and made sound changes in station management. Procedures have been developed in the medical section that greatly speeds serology and pregnancy testing. Commanders are using every opportunity to meet with their recruiting counterparts and guidance counselors to articulate the advantages of expedited processing. Operations sections are analyzing their functions and making decisions to work smarter rather than harder.

Transportation clerks throughout the country have analyzed their PSROs and made specific changes by the scores which have enabled thousands of applicants to arrive at reception centers earlier. Finally, as an ancillary benefit to analyzing procedures to have applicants arrive sooner at reception centers, many stations in the western part of our country have proven that by holding some applicants overnight they can ship the individual the next day to the reception center, have them arrive earlier in the day, and save the government thousands of dollars in transportation costs.

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GLOSSARY *

Applicant: An individual voluntarily applying for enlistment into the armed forces.

Chief Medical Officer: A Civil Service physician assigned as the Chief of the medical section in the MEPS.

Delay Enlistment/Delay Entry Program (DEP): The Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force program to enlist personnel into special inactive reserve groups pending enlistment into the active service at a future date.

DEP-In: An applicant entering the DEP as evidenced by the taking of the oath of enlistment and signature on the DEP - In contract.

DEP-Out: A person who was in the DEP and is "now coming out of the DEP" and going on active duty (basic training).

Fluorescent Treponemal Antibody - Absorption Test: A blood test that is administered to those who have a positive serology test to determine the presence of syphilis.

Guidance Counselors: Military personnel that are assigned to the recruiting services of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force who are in the MEPS to perform processing for their applicants.

Interservice Recruitment Committee (IRC): A committee established to provide a forum for the coordination,

CONTINUED

discussion, and resolution of areas of mutual concern to the MEPS and local area recruiting organizations. The committee is composed of Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Air Force Recruiting squadrons, and MEPS commander.

Joint Recruitment Commanders Committee (JRCC): A committee composed of the commanders of the recruiting services, USMEPCOM, and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau (NGB) whose purpose is to provide interface between the functions of recruiting and processing at the command level.

Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS): Stations that determine applicant eligibility for the armed forces. Duties include enlistment qualifications testing, medical examination, and administrative requirements, to effect an enlistment/reenlistment of an applicant, assignment, and shipment of the individual to a recruit reception station or other initial duty station as applicable.

Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC): A US Army command that has the responsibility to obtain transportation for applicants from the MEPS to their reception centers.

Pre-Accession Interview: (PAI) An interview given by MEPS personnel (prior to the administration of the active duty oath of enlistment) to enlistees being discharged from the DEP. This is an additional aid to the services in preventing fraudulent entry into the Armed Forces.

Physical Inspection: An abbreviated physical examination given to applicants before their going on active duty. Height, weight, serology, pregnancy testing and a physical inspection is performed on applicants.

Passenger Standing Route Orders (PSROs): The designated routing and specific carrier to get applicants from the MEPS station to the specific reception center.

Reception Centers: The various reception locations for enlistees going on active duty. (e.g., Lackland, Great Lakes, Parris Island). Known also as recruit training centers, or basic training or boot camp.

Red Carpet Program: Procedures employed by the MEPS which ensure that the individuals receive personalized, efficient, and courteous service.

Shippers: Accessions/inductees released from the MEPS to reception stations.

USMEPCOM: The United States Military Entrance Processing Command Headquarters that is situated at Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Illinois.

* Hq USMEPCOM PAM 310-5: USMEPCOM Standard Terminology and Definitions, undated.

FIGURE 1

APPLICANT FLOW
(AVERAGE DEP-IN)

ARRIVAL/CHECK-IN (CONTROL DESK)	MEDICAL (PRE-MEDICAL)	COMMANDER'S BRIEFING	MEDICAL (CONSULT)	MEDICAL PROCESSING	GUIDANCE COUNSELOR (LUNCH/SPECIAL TESTS)
0600-0700	0615-0730	0730	0750	0830-1000	0930-1500
OPERATIONS	PEI/DOCUMENT PREPARATION	GUIDANCE COUNSELOR	PRE-ENLISTMENT BRIEFING ENLISTMENT CEREMONY FINAL SIGNATURE/DD FORM 4	GUIDANCE COUNSELOR/ DEPARTURE	
1100-1600	1 HR PER APP	1 HR PER APP	1200-1700	1700	

FIGURE 2

APPLICANT FLOW
(AVERAGE SHIPPER)

CHECK-IN	MEDICAL INSPECTION	GUIDANCE COUNSELORS	OPERATIONS SECTION	OATH ENLISTMENT	1ST TRANS BRIEF
0600-0700	0615-0745	0745-1100	1100		1145
2ND TRANS BRIEF	1ST BUS DEPARTS MEPS	2ND BUS DEPARTS MEPS	AIRPORT	1ST APPLICANT DEPARTS AIRPORT	LAST APPLICANT DEPARTS AIRPORT
1245	1300	1330	1330-1400	1400	1600

FIGURE 3

TRANSPORTATION LIST FOR 03JAN85

LACKLAND AFB TX (1000)

FR-F GETTYS, GERGORY NMN
 FR-F HARRIS, BENFORD L.
 FR-F WHITAKER, RODNEY O.
 FR-F WILSON, DAVID K.

FT SILL OK (1000)

AR-A WOODS, PHILLIP M.
 AR-A OWENS, OTIS L.

PARRIS ISLAND SC (1230)

MR-M BLAIR, SELBY A.
 MR-M CROMARTIE, ANDREW Y.
 MV-M HARRIS, CHARLES NMN (K)
 MR-M THOMPSON, RICARDO A.

NTC GREAT LAKES IL (1230)

NR-N CIANI, JAMES V. JR.,
 241112178, SR
 NR-N DUGAN, TIMOTHY J.
 NR-N SUTTON, JAMES W. JR.
 NV-N DAVIS, ANTHONY E. (4X8)

NTC ORLANDO FL (1230)

NV-N YEOMANS, BRUCE L.,
 245238252, (3X8)
 NR-N CATRON, KIMBERLEY K. (F)
 NV-N DEPENNING, MOLLY A. (SAM)

FT BENNING GA (1255)

AR-A HAWKINS, DARRYL D.
 AR-A WALKER, ROBERT B. (PS)
 AR-A ODOM, JAMES H.
 AR-A ROACH, ERNEST L.
 AR-A TERRELL, DAVID W.
 AV-A COURTWRIGHT, JOSEPH M. (R)

FT LEONARDWOOD MO (1255)

AR-A BARNES, DALLIS L.
 AR-A CARRINGTON-SMITH,
 ROBERT J.
 AR-A FREEMAN, PAUL G.
 AR-A WHITE, RODNEY D.
 AR-A CLARK, BRUCE E.
 AR-A HERDENER, STEVEN C.
 AR-A BELL, BEORGE NMN

NTC SAN DIEGO CA (1300)

NV-N DAGNACHEW, ESKINDER
 NMN (3X8)
 NR-N DIXON, LINDSEY R. (PS)

FT JACKSON SC (1330)

WEEKS, TY R.
 SMITH, STEPHANIE
 DAUGHETY, KELVIN D.
 CABLES, RAYMOND W.
 HAYES, ANGELA (R)
 MAYFY, JOHN W. JR. (R)
 PATRICK, SHELDON NMN (R)

<u>BR SVC</u>	<u>DEP</u>	<u>ACT</u>	<u>PP</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
USMC	3	4	1	8
USAF	5	6	0	11
USN	2	9	3	14
USA	5	18	1	24
USAR	0	4	0	4
NG	0	0	0	0
MISC	0	0	0	5
TOTALS	15	41	10	66

LACKLAND AFB TX (ASAP)

WALKER, ROBERT P. (OTS) POV
 CORNELIUS, JOEL D. (OTS) POV

END

FILMED

8-85

DTIC